

Edited by Greg Cuthbertson, Hennie Pretorius and Dana Robert

Frontiers of
African Christianity



Essays in Honour of Inus Daneel



UNISA

**African Initiatives in
Christian Mission VIII**



Essays in Honour of Inge Dorel

University of North-West, Potchefstroom



Inus Daneel

Edited by Greg Cuthbertson, Hennie Pretorius and Dana Robert

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African Christianity



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University of South Africa, Pretoria

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

CONTENTS

Series preface	ix
Introduction by editors	xiii
Acknowledgements	xxii
Contributing authors	xxiii
I The many names of Inus Daneel	1
1 Dana L Robert, 'M L Daneel: missionary as folk theologian'	1
2 Frans J Verstraelen, 'Even hunters can change: a personal appraisal of Inus Daneel and his work'	16
3 Willem Saayman, 'My friend Mafuranhunzi'	31
4 Reuben Marinda, 'Mudavanhu: the one who loves the people'	36
5 Interviews with Chiefs Chikwanda, Chivi and Murinye, 'Muchakata and the War of the Trees'	43
6 Solomon Zvanaka, 'Bishop Moses, the Earthkeeper'	55
7 Larry Rasmussen, 'Bishop Moses and the trees'	69
8 Greg Cuthbertson, 'Chakarakata and Chimurenga: stories of the Zimbabwean War of Liberation'	75
II Daneel's academic legacy: AIC studies and African religions	
<i>AIC Studies</i>	
9 Stan Nussbaum, 'The three-self formula in light of the emergence of African Independent Churches'	86
10 Allan Anderson, 'Healing in the Zion Christian Churches of Southern Africa: Daneel's research in Zimbabwe compared with the South African Movement'	103
11 Nicolas Stebbing, CR, 'You shall have no other gods before me'	120
12 Stephen Hayes, 'Issues of "Catholic" ecclesiology in Ethiopian-type AICs'	137
13 Hennie L Pretorius, 'Strange are the ways of Zion: a coloured Zionist pioneer'	153
14 Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, 'Interpreting the interpreters of AICs and other grassroots Christian communities in South Africa'	173

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CONTENTS

Series preface	ix
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Acknowledgements	xxii
Contributing authors	xxiii

I The many names of Inus Daneel	1
1 Dana L Robert, 'M L Daneel: missionary as folk theologian'	1
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3 Willem Saayman, 'My friend Mafuranhunzi'	31
4 Reuben Marinda, 'Mudavanhu: the one who loves the people'	36
5 Interviews with Chiefs Chikwanda, Chivi and Murinye, 'Muchakata and the War of the Trees'	43
6 Solomon Zvanaka, 'Bishop Moses, the Earthkeeper'	55
7 Larry Rasmussen, 'Bishop Moses and the trees'	69
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9 Stan Nussbaum, 'The three-self formula in light of the emergence of African Independent Churches'	86
10 Allan Anderson, 'Healing in the Zion Christian Churches of Southern Africa: Daneel's research in Zimbabwe compared with the South African Movement'	103
11 Nicolas Stebbing, CR, 'You shall have no other gods before me'	120
12 Stephen Hayes, 'Issues of "Catholic" ecclesiology in Ethiopian-type AICs'	137
13 Hennie L Pretorius, 'Strange are the ways of Zion: a coloured Zionist pioneer'	153
14 Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, 'Interpreting the interpreters of AICs and other grassroots Christian communities in South Africa'	173

African Religions

15	Janet Hodgson, 'Mantsopa: popular religion and the Anglican Church in South Africa'	210
16	J N J Kritzinger, 'Pamberi! Towards a pilgrim theology'	236
17	Marcelle Manley, 'One god, many people'	248
18	Matthew Schoffeleers, 'On the interplay between political and therapeutic ngoma: a case from Malawi'	268

III Bibliography of the writings of M L Daneel 286

Index	293
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SERIES PREFACE

Literature on Christian mission in Africa has been biased toward the activity of Western-oriented mission. White missionaries, Western mission policies and the relationship of mission to European imperialism have dominated the discussion of African missions. Little or no attention has been paid by scholars to African initiatives in Christian mission, nor have missiological studies been made from the perspective of the so-called recipients. Yet the phenomenal growth of Christianity in Africa has occurred in the twentieth century, much of it after the independence of the continent from outside control. The series 'African Initiatives in Christian Mission' represents an attempt to address the reality that the spread of Christianity in Africa, its shape and character has been the product of African Christians, both in the 'Mission Churches' and the 'African Initiated/Independent Churches (AICs).¹

Mission Churches and AICs are the two primary ecclesial contexts in which African initiative has occurred. Mission Churches are those that have evolved directly from the outreach of Western denominations, and still represent the collegial traditions concerned. African Initiated Churches are churches begun by Africans in Africa primarily for Africans. AICs have consistently asserted their own leadership autonomy and religio-cultural contextuality free from the immediate control of influence of Western-oriented church leaders. These classificatory terms are somewhat misleading in that AICs are missionary churches par excellence, and the Mission Churches, by virtue of the missionary contributions of their members from the beginnings of their history, could be characterised as African Initiated Churches. Nevertheless the distinction between the two families of churches remains important for historical and sociological reasons.

This series seeks to overcome some of the limitations in previous studies of missions in Africa. Mission Churches have been analysed primarily as denominational institutions, with a focus on educational work, or else as participants in political processes such as nation building. Less attention has

1 Nomenclature varies on the two groups of African churches. 'Mission Churches' have also been called 'Historical or Established Churches'. The acronym 'AICs' originally stood for African Independent Churches, a term which is still preferred by many scholars. In recent years the World Council of Churches has tended to use the term 'African Initiated Churches'. In this series, different authors are free to use any of the three they choose. But in the introduction to the series the editors generally refer to 'African Initiated Churches' because the term resonates with the title 'African Initiatives in Christian Mission'.

been paid to Mission Churches as social movements, as products of indigenous culture and leadership, or as creators of African theologies. In short, the indigenous mission dimension has been weak in many of these studies. Works on Mission Churches today tend to be generalised rather than based on reliable, representative information gleaned from empirical enquiries. A predominantly male image of church history, moreover, has resulted in a paucity of literature on the contribution of women to church life and church expansion. The roles of black women pioneers in African churches are of particular interest to the editors of the series.

As regards the African Initiated Churches, the tendency in most of the earlier studies has been to assess AICs in terms of reaction to Western missions, separatism or protest against oppressive colonialism. As a result the missionary genius, missionary methods and missiological significance of AICs have not been studied in depth. However, the contribution of the AICs to the growth and religion-cultural footedness of Christianity in Africa is of vital importance for the development of a relevant mission theology in Africa. It is increasingly evident that in terms of growth rates, indigenised evangelisation, missionary campaigns, and ecclesiastic contextualisation, the AICs are not peripheral but belong to the mainstream of African Christianity. Their contribution therefore should be evaluated as such, alongside that of the Mission Churches. Critical, yet open and fair-minded field studies should overcome the bias that has frequently distorted AIC studies in the past.

The ideas behind African Initiatives in Christian Mission originated in an interdisciplinary research project conceived by Professor Marthinus L Daneel. With thirty years of empirical research on AICs in Zimbabwe, Daneel gathered a team of researchers from South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Malawi and received a grant in 1994 from The Pew Charitable Trusts. Assisted by field workers, researchers set out to gather data on different facets of African initiative within various churches in southern Africa. Meeting periodically at the Department of Missiology at the University of South Africa, the researchers reported on the work in progress and received feedback from other team members. The cooperative nature of the project was essential to its success, for the original team included members of Mission Churches and AICs, academics and practitioners, blacks and whites. The Research Institute for Theology and Religion at Unisa provided administrative support; and Professor Dana Robert participated as the representative of Boston University, the official host institution for the project.

Out of the project meeting emerged a decision to hold an international conference in 1997 on 'African Initiatives in Christian Mission in Southern Africa'. As well as the conference, the group decided to launch a publication series that would make the results of the project available to scholars and church people in Africa. Given the lack of research and its limitations as outlined above, the project participants decided to broaden the focus of the series beyond southern Africa and, by implication, beyond the core group of scholars. The widest possible definition of 'mission' underlies the series. The participant scholars agreed to deal essentially with Christian mission: the outreach of Christian faith and life in the extension of Christ's good news beyond the boundaries of ignorance, cultures, poverty, suffering or whatever obstacles obscure a clear Christian witness in the world. Nevertheless, not all contributors are missiologists and their research methodologies include phenomenological, social-anthropological, historical and distinctly non-theological approaches, or a combination of these. Yet the team feels that even if the joint venture, against the background of diverse disciplines, runs the risk of controversy and overdiversity within the series, the overall outcome will be both challenging and enriching. The qualification 'African initiative', too, is not subject to narrow definition. Black and white African theologians, for instance, are contributors in this series. And despite the predominant concern with black African initiatives, a number of studies on white missionary endeavour will be included, particularly the attempts of black African scholars to interpret the legacy of white-controlled missions, their impact on African society and the attitudes and response of African communities to such endeavour. In many respects white and black participation in mission in Africa are two sides of the same coin, the implication being that study of one enhances understanding of the other.

On behalf of all participants in this joint research and publishing venture, we express our appreciation to our sponsors, the staff of Unisa's Research Institute for Theology and Religion, and Unisa Press; their support remains crucial in the realisation of the envisaged goals.

INTRODUCTION

Frontiers of African Christianity Essays in honour of Inus Daneel

In 1964 a young doctoral student in theology at the Free University of Amsterdam completed his comprehensive examinations and boarded a boat for South Africa. After disembarking in Cape Town, he drove fifteen hundred miles to Bikita in Rhodesia. Product of a missionary home and fluent in Shona, he was fascinated by the interplay among African traditional religions, Shona culture and Christianity. The best way to understand the African influence on Christian theology, he decided, was to move into the Shona communal lands among members of African Independent Churches (AICs). As participant-observer, he would be able to experience firsthand both traditional religion and the indigenous church integration of African culture and Christianity. After living for a few months at the Zion City of Bishop Samuel Mutendi, the student moved to Chingombe Chieftancy in Gutu District where he built his own wattle and daub hut. For the next three years, with Chingombe as his base of operations, the student explored the lifestyle of the people in the rural areas. In the African spirit of reciprocity, he began each day by administering medicine to groups of the needy, and then conducted interviews, surveys and observations of the rich religious life around him. He became the driver who took people to the distant mission hospital for emergencies. On the day in 1965 when Rhodesian prime minister Ian Smith announced the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, thereby making civil war inevitable, the student was listening to the radio while delivering the baby of a village woman in the back of his truck.

The political events of 1965 and his years in the Shona communal areas in defiance of an 'apartheid system' proved to be a major turning point in the student's life. Rather than accepting several offers of 'safe' academic posts in the Netherlands or South Africa, or becoming a Dutch Reformed missionary in his parents' footsteps, Inus Daneel bonded with the so-called heretics, the indigenous Christians of rural Zimbabwe. Over the next few decades, despite civil war, shattered finances, family traumas and the disapproval of peers in the Dutch Reformed Church, he pursued his relationship with the Shona Independent Churches. Although he began by studying the AICs, his

participation among them gradually led him to become part of them. As the first scholar ever to live long term among indigenous Christians, he also became the first outsider to be granted an audience with the oracular high-god of the Shona at the Matopo Hills. His 'quest for belonging' erased scholarly distance during a historic period of intense political struggle. Rather than following his anticipated career as a scholarly academic, Inus Daneel became a folk theologian – studying, interpreting, and seeking to articulate the contextualised theologies of the Shona indigenous churches.

This *Festschrift* therefore honours not only a 'Western' scholar, but an activist whose involvement with the Shona Independent Churches has included founding an ecumenical movement and theological training programme among them in the 1970s, and launching a grassroots environmental movement of traditionalists and Christians in the 1980s. Simultaneous with working among the Shona in Zimbabwe, Daneel held a post as professor of missiology from 1981 to 1996 at the University of South Africa. He anchored the 'African' side of the Unisa missiological curriculum. As researcher, Daneel has authored over a dozen books and many articles to date, on topics including African traditional religions, AIC studies, histories of ecumenical and environmental movements, and the involvement of religion with *Chimurenga*, the wartime liberation struggle. His arresting photographs of religious rituals have deepened the value of his work.

The many names of Inus Daneel

The first section of the volume contains reflections on Inus Daneel's life and work. Because Daneel is both an academic and an activist, evaluation of his contribution to African religions would be incomplete if only his written scholarship were considered. This *Festschrift* is thus somewhat unorthodox in moving beyond mere academic appraisal to a consideration of the meaning of Daneel's life in historical, theological and contextual perspective. So exactly who is Inus Daneel? Reformed Afrikaner missionary, or advocate of Shona traditional religion? Apolitical romantic or liberationist in solidarity with African community life? Big game hunter or conservationist? Bishop Moses, founder of a contextually specific tree-planting movement, or model for international environmental awareness? Scholar or prophet? Spirit medium active in African traditional religion or Christian ecumenical figure? Called by God, or simply a fallible human being?

What is striking about the essays in part I is how the ethnicity, scholarly discipline and social location of the authors influence their understanding of Daneel's significance. Looking at him from different angles reveals the complexity of his character and the resulting creative, often controversial, aspects of his work. Each author gives him a different name – Daneel as missionary, lay theologian, *Mafuranhunzi* the sharpshooter, Muchakata the wild cork tree, Mudavanhu who 'loves the people', Bishop Moses the ecumenist, environmentalist and prize-winning historical novelist. Yet somehow all the different perspectives are required to give a whole picture.

The first essay is by Professor Dana Robert of Boston University. An American mission historian, she puts Daneel into the context of mission history by writing a biographical overview of his life and work. She places him in the ranks of the 'great' missionary-ethnographers and activists – men like Maurice Leenhardt and Bruno Gutmann. As a North American, she sees him as representative of a continental (particularly Dutch and German) approach to missionary activism among rural, grassroots communities. His complex identity as both Afrikaner and Zimbabwean led him to combine scholarship with participation in Shona community life. As his wife since 1996, Professor Robert also comments on how Daneel's private struggles have impacted his work.

In 'Even hunters can change', Professor Frans Verstraelen evaluates Daneel's work on African Indigenous Churches in light of its singular importance in drawing the attention of Dutch scholarship to the phenomena. As a leading Dutch Catholic missiologist and professor in Holland and in Zimbabwe, Verstraelen reflects on Daneel's evolution as a lay theologian over twenty-five years of acquaintance. He documents Daneel's theological development from Reformed dogma to a 'science of religions' engagement with African traditional religions. Even as Daneel's view of Christ has expanded over the decades, Verstraelen concludes that he has remained consistent in his missionary vocation of 'representing the Good News in Jesus Christ'.

The third essay, by Willem Saayman, former head of the Department of Missiology at the University of South Africa, evaluates Daneel as colleague, friend, and fellow Afrikaner and hunter – *Mafuranhunzi*, or 'sharpshooter' in the Shona language. Saayman critiques him as a 'romantic' in his relationship with the African bush and with traditional rural life, in contrast to an urban-based, more radical black theology that openly challenged the apartheid system. Yet in Daneel's 'romanticism' – and meticulous field-

based scholarship – his affinity with AICs spearheaded the broad change in Christian scholarship from a negative to positive appraisal of them.

In contrast to the articles that reflect on Inus Daneel's life and work from a European perspective, the next three contributions come from indigenous church leaders and traditional chiefs in Zimbabwe. The Shona contributors remark on Daneel's prophetic solidarity with the Shona people before and during the Zimbabwean liberation war of 1965 to 1980. Ndaza Zionist Bishop Reuben Marinda, who worked with Daneel from the 1970s, describes how he brought respect to the AICs by organising them into Fambidzano, an ecumenical movement of indigenous churches that sponsored theological education by extension during the difficult years of armed struggle. Behind his back, rural people called Inus Daneel 'Mudavanhu', the 'one who loves the people'.

In articles on 'Muchakata' and 'Bishop Moses', Shona leaders discuss Inus Daneel's leadership in Zirron and the tree-planting, environmental movement he initiated in the 1980s after the end of the liberation war. As 'Muchakata', or 'wild cork tree', Daneel's role in supporting traditional chiefs and spirit mediums comes to light in interviews conducted with three Shona chiefs. In one interview, Chief Chivi speculates that Daneel's sympathy with African traditional religion comes about because he is a spirit medium inhabited by the ancestors. From a Christian perspective, the Reverend Solomon Zvanaka, a Zionist and successor to Daneel as director of Zirron, narrates how Daneel came to be called 'Bishop Moses' by the indigenous churches in Masvingo Province. A 'cult figure' among the grassroots people, Daneel is above all an ecumenical leader who promoted inter-religious understanding between the AICs and African traditional religion.

The final two articles in the section on Daneel's life and work evaluate his work in a global framework. Larry Rasmussen, the leading environmental ethicist in the United States, describes the activities of 'Bishop Moses' in the tree-planting movement. As leader of a 'people's movement', Daneel has accomplished a remarkable feat in ritualising environmental awareness in a specific context. While the people of Zirron do not realise the significance of their own accomplishment, it is profoundly important from a global point of view.

Greg Cuthbertson, head of the History Department at the University of South Africa, compares the scholarly contributions of Inus Daneel and noted

Oxford historian Terence Ranger as the two most prominent scholars on Zimbabwe's ancestral religion. Cuthbertson explores the anti-colonial, pro-Zimbabwean stance in Daneel's war novel, *Guerilla snuff*, as well as its autobiographical significance. While Daneel has excelled in empirical research, Ranger has historicised his findings – yet both men treat Africans as agents of their own destinies rather than 'passive victims'.

Through their different interpretations of Inus Daneel's life and work, the authors in the first section provide keen insights into his multifaceted contributions as both academic and activist. They agree in seeing him as a unique and creative figure who bridges multiple worlds – African and European, Christian and traditionalist, white and black, scholarly and grassroots. The genius of his accomplishment is his holism and his single-minded refusal to compromise his vocation in order to please his critics.

Daneel's academic legacy: AIC studies and African religions

As pioneer researcher on AICs among the Shona, as first researcher to gain admittance to the high-god oracle at the Matopo Hills, and as professor of missiology for fifteen years at the University of South Africa (Unisa), Inus Daneel has profoundly impacted the shape of scholarship on religion in southern Africa. In this section of the *Festschrift*, the essays are broken into two groups that represent the major issues to which Inus has devoted his scholarly career: AIC studies, and the study of African religions. Contributions by his former students reveal the generative power of his ideas, as they pay tribute to his scholarly inspiration and then extend the scope of his interests through their own research. As these essays show, Inus Daneel is the rare writer and teacher whose ideas pushed his colleagues' scholarship into new and fruitful directions.

The essays on AIC studies show the importance of Inus Daneel's work as scholar, teacher and mentor in empirical research among grassroots Christian communities. During his tenure at Unisa, Daneel supervised master's and doctoral students – the best of whom followed in their teacher's footsteps by undertaking their own substantial 'field' research among selected groups of churches, including AICs, Pentecostals and historic mission churches. After retiring from Unisa, Daneel continued his mentoring role in The Pew Project on African Initiatives in Christian Mission by interacting with African scholars on their research, visiting them at their

research sites, holding conferences, and launching the book series 'African Initiatives in Christian Mission'.

Just as Inus Daneel began his career as a missionary theologian, it is appropriate to begin the essays on AIC studies with a reflection by American Mennonite missiologist Stan Nussbaum, a former doctoral student and now director of training for Global Mapping International. Nussbaum acknowledges Daneel's crucial defence of AICs as true churches at a time when they were considered mere heretical movements. Nevertheless, Nussbaum uses the AICs as a critique of the old missionary 'three-self' formula – self-government, self-support and self-propagation. AICs have exposed the limits of the model by achieving independence without necessarily showing the maturity of being self-critical, self-motivating, or self-fulfilling. Continuing the activist orientation of his mentor, Nussbaum calls for an intercultural partnership that will help AICs gain the maturity they seek.

In a second essay by a former doctoral student of missionary background, Allan Anderson, at present director of the Research Unit for Pentecostal Studies in the Centre for Missiology and World Christianity at the University of Birmingham, Britain, reflects how Inus Daneel first stimulated his interest in AICs. Subsequently Anderson has produced a number of important books on South African Pentecostals and Zionists and holds a key post in Great Britain. The substance of Professor Anderson's article is to compare some of his research findings on the Zion Christian Churches of South Africa with those of Daneel on the Zion Christian Churches in Zimbabwe. First Anderson summarises Daneel's research methodology as based on seeing both 'inculturation and transformation' in AICs – in the words of Daneel's three volumes on the Shona, *Old and new*. As a second-generation researcher on AICs, however, Anderson critiques his teacher's need to see a radical separation of AICs from African traditional religions as a way of defending the Christian integrity of the churches. While following Daneel's basic research agenda, Anderson has moved in his own thinking to see more continuity between AICs and mission churches than Daneel has acknowledged.

Former master's students Father Nicolas Stebbing, CR, and Stephen Hayes each contribute an article that extends particular aspects of Daneel's legacy. In 'You shall have no other gods before me', Stebbing examines the work of healer Fr Muyambi of St Agnes Gokwe Mission in light of the Hebrew Bible admonitions against idolatry. Unlike Anderson, who found continuity of ancestral inspiration between South African Zionist prophets and traditional

diviners, Stebbing follows Daneel in finding an explicit rejection of traditionalist healing norms by followers of Father Muyambi, and indeed by other Zimbabwean Christians as well. Hayes relates his own research to Daneel's extensive work on succession struggles in Shona AICs, as found in volume 3 of *Old and new*. In examining the class of AICs generally categorised as 'Ethiopian', Hayes finds that Ethiopian secessions from the Anglican/Methodist episcopal tradition are connected with 'catholic' tendencies in ecclesiology. The search for 'apostolic succession' has been a tool in authority struggles within Ethiopian-type AICs, which emerged mostly from episcopal-type mission churches. The search for authority has even led some AICs to merge into Greek Orthodoxy.

The final two articles on themes relevant to studies of AICs were written by colleagues involved with Inus Daneel in the multinational research project African Initiatives in Christian Mission, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts in the 1990s. Since 1995 Daneel has led an interracial team of researchers from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and the United States in documenting African missionary leadership in Southern Africa. Dr Hennie Pretorius was first drawn to AIC research by reading works by Daneel, and he has recently been conducting empirical research among Zionists in the Cape Flats. In 'Strange are the ways of Zion: a coloured Zionist pioneer', Pretorius stresses the importance of oral history for AIC studies by narrating the life story of William Louw, a 'coloured' Zionist. Shedding light on the relatively rare phenomenon of AICs founded by people of mixed descent, Pretorius stresses Louw's ecumenical and irenic spirit, and also the coloured rejection of certain aspects of African traditional religion more readily incorporated into Christianity by black African Zionists.

Finally, Professor Tinyiko Maluleke, dean of theology at the University of South Africa (Unisa), offers a trenchant analysis of the state of AIC research in 'Interpreting the interpreters of AICs ...'. Maluleke wryly notes the new interest in grassroots Christianity since the demise of the anti-apartheid theological agenda – an interest that now includes AICs. He traces the missionary dominance of AIC research for the past century, and speculates why so few black Africans have undertaken such studies. Finding the 'empirical observer' approach to grassroots community research just as Western as that of liberation theologians in universities, Maluleke analyses selected recent studies of South African AICs by white scholars. While the scope of Maluleke's article cannot reach to the exhaustive Zimbabwean

studies of Inus Daneel, he praises him for being one of the few white scholars who have 'fallen in love' with, and devoted their lives to the wellbeing of their research subjects. Like Anderson, Maluleke sees continuity between the theological agendas and practices of AICs and historic mainline, mission churches. It is worth noting that with his appointment to teach African theology and missiology at Unisa, Tinyiko Maluleke is the successor to Inus Daneel in the Unisa Faculty of Missiology.

The final four articles in this *Festschrift* reflect the influence of Inus Daneel's groundbreaking work on the Shona high-god cult, as well as his ecumenical engagement of African traditional religions from a sympathetic Christian perspective. Dr Janet Hodgson, author of the well-known study of Ntsikana, begins her essay by commenting on the importance of Daneel's early study, *The god of the Matopo Hills*. In his pilgrimage to the oracular cave of Mwari, high-god of the Shona, Inus Daneel modelled respect by the researcher for the wisdom of the African ancestors, as well as pushed the study of African traditional religions to new heights. Taking a 'science of religions' approach to religious pilgrimage, Hodgson proceeds to analyse the contest over sacred space embodied in the legend of Mantsopa at Modderpoort, South Africa. Honoured by many African Christians for her healing and prophetic powers, Mantsopa has become a popular 'saint' whose cave is a site of sacred pilgrimage. The local Anglican hierarchy also seeks to control the sacred cave and thereby control the piety of the people. Hodgson explores the clash over sacred space, which is also a clash between inculturated and foreign forms of Christianity.

In '*Pamberi! Towards a pilgrim theology*', Klippies Kritzinger, former dean of the theology Faculty at Unisa, also explores the image of pilgrimage. Like Hodgson, he finds Inus Daneel's relationship with African traditional religion to be an inspiration for his own scholarship. But while Hodgson offers a case study of Christian pilgrimage in the contest over sacred space, Kritzinger explores his own missionary theology as a pilgrimage. Always moving toward Jesus at the centre, being in mission is a journey of discovering Christ already at work among the peoples and religions of the world. Daneel's engagement in inter-religious dialogue through the tree-planting movement becomes a model for Kritzinger's pilgrim missionary theology.

Unlike Hodgson and Kritzinger, who appreciated Inus Daneel's own pilgrimage to Matonjeni as sources for their Christian engagement with African piety and religions, Marcelle Manley offers her own reflections from

an intentionally non-Christian perspective. In a tribute to Inus Daneel as her teacher and as sympathetic researcher into African traditional religion, Manley presents fundamental conceptual differences between African and Western worldviews that she noted in her thesis research. She explores the continuity between sacred and profane, the focus on kinship, and the hierarchical social structure of traditional African societies. While wary of Inus Daneel's theological approach toward AIC models of ministry, she extends some of his insights beyond the study of Christianity, into the study of other African spiritualities.

The final article in the *Festschrift* is contributed by Matthew Schoffeleers. A Dutch Catholic missionary priest and former professor in the Netherlands, Schoffeleers, like Inus Daneel, is part of a distinguished international community of mission scholars involved in research on African religion. Throughout their long friendship, Schoffeleers and Daneel have worked on similar research issues, notably on personal healing and on earth 'healing cults'. In his essay, Professor Schoffeleers discusses the interrelationship of the Mbona cult of Malawi to the Tengani kingship. As in Inus Daneel's studies of the role of the Mwari cult in *Chimurenga*, Schoffeleers finds that the Mbona cult can become a 'major locus of rituals of rebellion' against undesirable government policies. The earth cult provides an 'interface' between private healing cults and the political system.

As the richness of these essays proves, the pioneering creativity of Inus Daneel's life and work extends in many directions. As he continues his vocation among the AICs, and his current research on the cult centres of Mwari, we wish Inus Daneel long life and every success – whether as missionary, as Bishop Moses, or under a new name and vision as yet unspoken.

Greg Cuthbertson

Hennie Pretorius

Dana Robert

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M L Daneel: missionary as folk theologian

Dana L Robert

M L 'Inus' Daneel belongs to a rare group of missionaries – those who combine prophetic ministry among a group of people with scholarly reflection on their lifeways.¹ In his lifetime commitment to the African Independent Churches among the Shona of Zimbabwe,² he is both prophet and scholar. Among the first researchers to argue in the 1960s that AICs were contextualised rather than heretical or reactionary forms of Christianity, he was the first researcher to live among them as 'participant-observer'. Over the decades, his involvement with Shona Christians culminated in his becoming 'Bishop Moses' of the Ndaza (Holy Cord) Zionists. Inus was the first white person to speak with the oracle of Mwari, the high-god of the Shona. In the Zimbabwean War of Liberation (1965–1980), at much risk and personal sacrifice, he founded Fambidzano, a long-lived ecumenical movement of AICs that conducted theological training and development programmes. During the late 1980s and 1990s, he spearheaded the largest grassroots tree-planting movement in southern Africa, a remarkable effort because it involves both traditionalists and Christians in a crusade to reclaim the ecologically ravaged communal lands. With the exception of a decade during the war, Inus Daneel has continued his scholarly output, producing among other things the most detailed study extant of AICs in one cultural group. Steeped in the traditions of Dutch Reformed missions from childhood, and trained in the methodologies of religious science, Inus Daneel has become,

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- 1 In evaluating the place of M L Daneel in mission history, one is struck by the similarities with Maurice Leenhardt (1878–1954), the French Reformed ethnographer who sought to preserve Kanak culture in the face of French imperialism in New Caledonia, and who vitalised native ministry independent of European control. In his commitment to the Shona people, Daneel resembles the German Lutheran Bruno Gutmann (1876–1966) whose devotion to the Chagga of Mount Kilimanjaro resulted in 23 books and 476 articles, many of them ethnographic studies.
 - 2 In most of his published writings, Daneel has used the term 'African Independent Churches'. By the mid 1990s, he was also using the phrase 'African Initiated Churches'. Consistent with the usage most common in his works to date, in this article the term 'African Independent Churches' (AICs) will be used.

above all, a folk theologian – interpreter of the lived-out Shona theologies, both traditional and Christian. He has dedicated his life to the goals of equipping the Shona-speaking churches for theological reflection, and analysing their rituals and belief systems – all motivated by the missionary desire to work for the reign of God.

Background and education, 1936–1964

Marthinus Louis Daneel was born of missionary parents at Morgenster Mission, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), on 24 August 1936. One of the largest mission complexes in the world, Morgenster was the pride of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Boasting in 1930 a school system with over 20 000 pupils taught by 548 teachers in 319 outstations, and a hospital (Cronje 1982:123–127), it was founded in 1891 by the Reverend A A Louw, Sr, a grandson of the Scottish minister Andrew Murray, Jr, leader of the evangelical wing of the South African Dutch Reformed Church and noted writer on spirituality.³ Louw travelled by train from the Cape to the Northern Transvaal, and by ox wagon with indigenous evangelists from there to the mountain of Chief Mugabe five miles from Great Zimbabwe. Barely surviving malaria, Louw named the mission with its lush forests 'Morgenster', or 'Day Star'.

The Andrew Murray/A A Louw legacy of evangelical Calvinism had a profound impact on Inus Daneel. Many of Murray's descendants became evangelical pastors, ministers' wives and missionaries. The missionary community at Morgenster was full of Murray descendants. Inus was no exception, for his grandmother Charlotte Murray Daneel was a granddaughter of the famous minister's father, Andrew Murray, Sr. The Daneels were also a ministerial family. Inus's great-grandfather, A B Daneel, was the first Dutch Reformed minister at Heidelberg in the Cape; he signified his allegiance to the evangelical version of the faith by encouraging revivals in his church and founding a branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Both of Inus's grandfathers were ministers. His father, Alec Daneel, who was born amid the poverty caused by the Anglo-Boer War, served for many years as treasurer of

3 Andrew Murray had an enormous impact on South African missions, and at least thirty of his immediate relatives and descendants became missionaries. See biographies of Murray by J Du Plessis, *The life of Andrew Murray in South Africa* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1920) and W M Douglas, *Andrew Murray and his message* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1926). On Louw, see A A Louw, *Andrew Louw van Morgenster* (Kaapstad: N G Kerk-Uitsig, 1965).

the vast Morgenster enterprises. His mother, Tina Muller Daneel, received her own call to missionary work and studied at the Dutch Reformed women's missionary training school, Friedenheim, before going to Nyasaland (Malawi) where she met her husband. Morgenster Mission before World War II was to Inus Daneel a warm and loving extended family – a paradise where mangoes and pawpaws dropped from the trees grown by the missionaries, wildlife abounded, and all were united in a common enterprise. As a child, Inus took the elderly A A Louw for rides in his go-cart and listened to him tell the ancient Shona myths.

Despite the attractions of 'paradise', Inus was nevertheless restless and independent from an early age, chafing under the structured piety imposed by his missionary heritage. As the only boy among four sisters, he spent as much time outdoors as allowed. At age 10 or 11 he went off to school, where his favorite subjects were writing and agriculture. After matriculating in 1954 from De Villiers Graaff High School in Villiersdorp, South Africa, a school that provided subsidies for missionary children, he enrolled at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) in 1955. Family resources were so scarce that he still wore clothing made by his mother, and he supported himself by driving taxis, fishing with mixed-race ('coloured') fishermen, and serving as a residence hall advisor for men. Although it seemed natural to pursue the theological course leading to ordination, Inus would have preferred to study anthropology. With the necessity to earn his living, and his extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports, he had little time for memorising the obligatory theology lectures. Although Inus was not politically active in opposing apartheid, his missionary background gave him fluency in Shona and an unusual openness to cross-cultural relationships. At a time when grand apartheid under prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd was segregating people into set racial groupings, Inus was reading accounts of anthropological investigations and mission work among black Africans in preparation for his own calling as a missionary among the Shona.

In 1960, having received a first degree in philosophy and psychology, and a second one in theology, but a year short of completing preparation for ordination, Inus won an Abe Bailey scholarship to tour the United Kingdom. The Bailey scholarship introduced promising South African students who showed leadership ability to the finer elements of 'British civilisation' such as universities, museums, and so forth. One of the other Bailey recipients in Inus's group was Richard Goldstone, later head of the Goldstone Commission. But the main benefit of the Bailey scholarship for Inus Daneel came when he

cashed in his return ticket to South Africa, took the money to the Netherlands, sought out theologian G C Berkouwer, and asked to take the preliminary doctoral examination in 'history of dogma' at the Free University of Amsterdam. Living as cheaply as possible, he passed the exam with top grades and thereby received scholarships to pursue a doctorate at the Free University.

Although he had been a casual student at Stellenbosch, Inus Daneel came into his own at the Free University, and he excelled in his studies, motivated by his desire to be a missionary among the Shona. He studied and passed examinations under the greatest Dutch theological and missiological minds of the twentieth century: Berkouwer in systematics; J H Bavinck in theology of religions and theory of missions; and J van den Berg in mission history. He studied with Hendrik Kraemer at a World Council of Churches gathering in Basel and he attended lectures by J C Hoekendijk at Utrecht. He was befriended by Swedish bishop and pioneer investigator of AICs Bengt Sundkler, and they visited each other frequently. After Inus's examinations, he was appointed senior lecturer at the Free University and simultaneously senior research fellow at the University of Leiden African Studies Centre. Fortunately, while Daneel was at Leiden, J F Holleman became director of the African Studies Centre. Holleman was an expert on customary law among the Shona. Through the combined efforts of Bavinck, Kraemer, and Holleman, Inus received Dutch government research funds through the African Studies Centre for three years of field work in Rhodesia on the topic of the relationship between African traditional religions and Christianity, with special focus on the African Independent Churches as the point of inter-religious contact.

Shortly before Daneel's return to Rhodesia in 1964, his chief mentor, Bavinck, became terminally ill. Bavinck's theology of religions deeply influenced Inus's thought and research.⁴ Coming from a pietistic back-

4 For a summary of Bavinck's work, see J van den Berg, 'Johan Herman Bavinck, 1895-1964', in Gerald H Anderson *et al* (eds) *Mission legacies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994). Bavinck's best-known book was *Inleiding in de Zendingwetenschap* (Kampen: J H Kok, 1954), translated into English as *An introduction to the science of missions*. On the nature of the theological training provided by Bavinck and other scholars at the Free University, see James D Bratt, 'Kuyper and Dutch theological education', in D G Hart and R Albert Mohler, Jr (eds) *Theological education in the evangelical tradition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996).

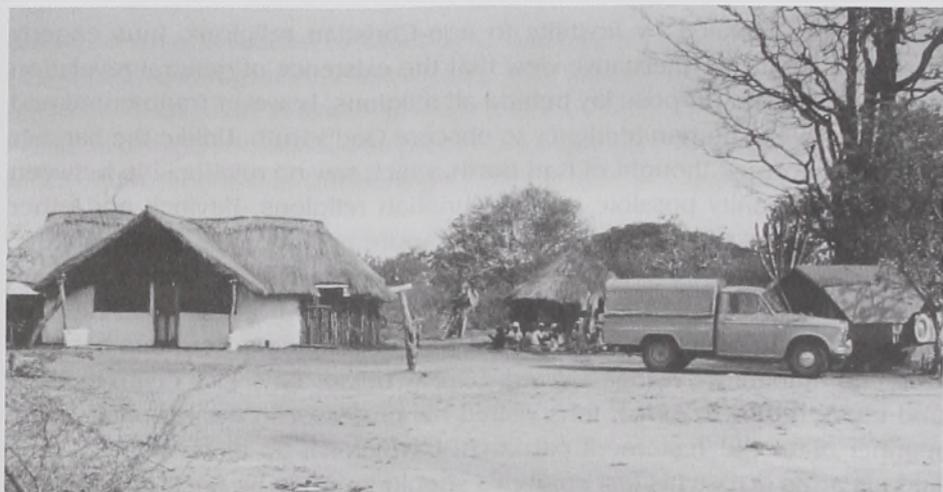
Another scholar whose ideas had a deep impact on Inus in graduate school was Anglican John V Taylor. Daneel wrote a hundred page, pre-dissertation thesis on Taylor's book *The primal vision: Christian presence amid African religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963). Taylor was writing in the Christian Presence Series edited by Max Warren and took a positive view of God's activity in the African traditional religions.

ground characterised by hostility to non-Christian religions, Inus eagerly absorbed Bavinck's alternative view that the existence of general revelation meant that divine purpose lay behind all religions, however fragmented and tarnished by the human tendency to obscure God's truth. Unlike the harsher German Reformed thought of Karl Barth, which saw no relationship between God and humanity possible in non-Christian religions, Bavinck and other Dutch Reformed missiologists retained a more positive view of other faiths. Bavinck maintained a creative tension between the belief that revelation existed in non-Christian faiths, and the proclamation of the Good News in Jesus Christ. In general revelation occurred in genuine encounters between God and humanity, Bavinck argued. Shortly before Bavinck's death in 1964 and Inus's return to Africa, Inus visited his professor in the hospital. In the manner of an Old Testament patriarch, Bavinck sat up in his hospital bed, laid his arms across his last student's shoulders while he knelt and blessed Inus for his ministry in Africa. Bavinck's blessing was one of the most significant moments in Inus Daneel's life, and its memory sustained him during the bleak war years and massive obstacles in his chosen life's work.

Early research and war years, 1964-1980

Returning to Rhodesia during the apartheid era, with smouldering racial tensions about to burst into flame, Inus nevertheless settled into an African hut in the Gutu rural homelands. Based on empirical observation, he concluded that the AICs were not a 'bridge back to heathenism', as the mission literature of the day proclaimed. Rather, as the first researcher of AICs to live among them and to understand them as a participant-observer, as an 'insider', Daneel realised that independency represented the Africanisation of Christianity. To use current language, he recognised that the AICs had contextualised the Christian gospel into their own culture. This exciting realisation put him at odds with Sundkler and the regnant European scholarship.⁵ Collecting data, conducting surveys, and interviewing AIC

5 Swedish missionary Bengt Sundkler's pioneer study of African Independency was first published as *Bantu prophets in South Africa* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1948). As a result of sustained conversations between Sundkler and Daneel, Sundkler later rejected his categorisation of some AICs as 'messianic', in which some AIC leaders reputedly substituted themselves for the mediatorial work of Christ. Instead, Sundkler concluded that AIC leadership was 'iconic' rather than 'messianic'. See Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and some Swazi Zionists* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).



In 1965 Inus Daneel and research assistants constructed a mud-and-pole research lodge in the Chingombe chiefdom, Gutu district. For more than two years this venue functioned as a healing and research centre. Each morning Inus and his team of field assistants treated up to 70 patients from surrounding villages at 'Prophet Square', before the day's research work could start



members, Inus began analysing the rituals, beliefs, histories, and sociological realities of the AICs.

Although he was living among the AICs, Inus also sought to gain the confidence of the traditionalists. As an outdoorsman and hunter, with fluency in Shona, he was in a unique position to be accepted into the Shona community. After eighteen months, he was allowed to approach the Matonjeni oracle of Mwari, the high-god of the Shona. This remarkable event was preceded by his proving divine favour for his quest: he shot a flying hawk, at great distance, through the neck – a hawk that was eating the villagers' fowl.⁶ As the first white person granted audience with the oracle, Daneel learned that Mwari was not an 'absent god', but was intimately concerned with the lives of his/her children. Rather than having disappeared after the unsuccessful First *Chimurenga* (liberation war) of 1896 against the British, Mwari had 'gone underground' but had maintained secret cultic traditions despite white domination of Rhodesia. In the voice of a woman, Mwari spoke to Daneel from the sacred caves in an ancient dialect and expressed displeasure at the poor treatment of his black children by his 'sister's' white children.⁷

The breakthroughs in field research in relation both to AICs and traditional religion were all the more remarkable given the beginning of guerrilla activity in the rural areas. As a white man and Afrikaner, Inus was naturally suspect to Africans eager to end white rule; he was a proverbial 'sitting duck' once the war broke out. As a Shona speaker living among blacks, he was anathema to white supremacists, who increasingly viewed him as a traitor and later as a draft dodger. Another complication in his situation was that Inus was a child of the mission, who in the eyes of some missionaries was compromising the Gospel by moving in with the 'heretics'. Missionaries expected him to return from abroad ready to work at Morgenster Mission. Instead, Inus returned to do fieldwork among the very people who had broken off from mission churches in the first place. By 1967 it was clear that he would not be working for the Dutch Reformed mission. The tensions in Inus Daneel's world – a white man in a black setting during a racial war, a missionary at heart who had somehow disappointed his larger mission community – tormented him for decades.

6 For his feat of marksmanship, Daneel received one of his honorific names from the Shona, Mafuranhunzi, 'the one who shoots the fly'.

7 For a description of Daneel's visit to Matonjeni and the message that Mwari gave him, see Daneel, 1970a.

Late in 1966 Inus married Beulah Curle, a nurse at Gutu mission, and they began a family. In 1967 they returned to Holland, and Inus began writing the results of his research. He lectured at the Roman Catholic University Nijmegen with Arnulf Camps, taught at the Hendrik Kraemer Institute of the Dutch Reformed Church in Oegstgeest, and worked on his thesis under the direction of D C Mulder in the science of religion, and Johannes Blauw in missiology at the Free University. In Holland he wrote four books that marked him as a highly original and ground-breaking scholar: *Zionism and faith-healing in Rhodesia* (1970); *The god of the Matopo Hills: an essay on the Mwari cult in Rhodesia* (1970); and *Old and new in Southern Shona Independent Churches* (volume I in 1971, volume II in 1974), the most complete study of African Independency to date, of which volume I was his dissertation. In his books and lectures and discussions with people like Bishop Sundkler, Harold Turner, David Barrett and other researchers, Inus argued forcefully against the 'bridge back to heathenism' interpretation of AICs and characterised them rather as 'bridges toward the Christian future'.

In 1971 Daneel received his doctorate. His parents proudly attended the formal defence, carrying with them a request from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa for him to head a new training institute for pastors of AICs. The school would be located in Johannesburg under government sponsorship, funded by the apartheid regime. Since Inus felt his missionary calling was to serve the AICs on their own terms, he turned down the offer. He knew that support from the apartheid government would ruin his ministry among the Independents and would put him in opposition to Beyers Naudé, who with his Christian Institute had founded an African Independent Church Association (AICA) in South Africa. Considering the job offer a 'sell-out', Inus refused. A more difficult refusal came in 1972 when the Free University offered him the chair in Non-Western Religions, a post he turned down because his life task was in Africa.

Back in Rhodesia with support from the Free University and then the Dutch Mission Councils, Inus launched an ecumenical ministry among the Shona-speaking AICs. His motivation in starting Fambidzano, which roughly translates a 'co-operative of black churches', was to 'plough back into the AICs something of the goodwill, friendship, trust and inspiration' which he had experienced among them (Daneel 1989:23). The church leaders' defensiveness in relation to mission churches stemmed in part from their complete lack of theological training, exacerbated by their isolation and competition with one another. In July 1972 Inus held the first large meeting

of AIC leaders. Through an exhausting process of 'shuttle diplomacy' as go-between and founder, Inus negotiated among different parties, including AIC bishops, government officials, and financial sponsors in Europe. The resulting successful organisation took ecumenical cooperation and theological training as its objectives and in 1984 added development as a priority, thus focusing on the 'realised eschatology' of the Shona AICs. By 1987, seventy AIC denominations were members. Theological Education by Extension (TEE) was the primary work of Fambidzano from 1973 until 1989, when development work started to override it. Inus wrote the story of the successes, challenges and tribulations of Fambidzano in the book *Fambidzano: ecumenical movement of Zimbabwean Independent Churches* (1989).

The personal cost exacted by Daneel's commitment to Fambidzano increased as the civil war intensified from 1975 until independence in 1980. As a white man of fighting age, he had to keep avoiding conscription, for to take up arms against the Shona would have violated his convictions and destroyed his work. Yet his life was often in danger and he lost white friends to guerrilla ambush, most notably his childhood friend the Reverend André Brand and his wife, Bineke, who did pastoral work in rural areas. Inus's sister and her family were ambushed upon returning to their farm, were severely injured but miraculously survived. Black friends and colleagues disappeared, as the Marxist-oriented guerrillas suspected Shona Christians of being pro-white. To help villagers get food, Inus culled game in sensitive areas where guerrillas operated. Travelling outside the convoys because of his ministry obligations, he often courted death. The worst blow occurred in 1977 when his wife, Beulah, took their four small children, Alec, Lidia, Talita and Inus, and moved permanently to South Africa. Then in 1978 his mother died. Tina Muller Daneel had been a superb linguist and active evangelist and teacher, and a support for her son in his unorthodox missionary journey.

To compensate for the loss of his family and to escape the stress of the war, Inus participated in the international tiger fishing tournament on Lake Kariba, placing with his team three firsts, a second, and a third over five years. To earn money, he founded a company 'Mutapa Eagles', designing and building fibreglass sports and fishing boats in a small factory. The cabin cruisers he designed are still among the most popular ones on the water at Lake Kariba today. To be able to visit his family occasionally, he learned to fly an airplane. Although he never became instrument rated, at times he had to hide in the clouds because of the risk of ground-to-air missiles.

Unisa years and Zirrcon, 1981-1995

Professionally, the greatest cost exacted by the war was that it took ten years from Daneel's scholarly work. Emotionally exhausted by the war, the loss of family, and the strains of building Fambidzano, in the 1970s he was unable to continue writing his series *Old and new in Southern Shona Independent Churches* even though he had already collected the data. It was not until after the war ended and Inus finally accepted an appointment as professor of missiology at the University of South Africa (Unisa) in 1981 that he was able to resume his scholarly reflection. Professor David Bosch, head of the Missiology Department at Unisa, invited Daneel to join him in what was a progressive Afrikaner department of missions – one staffed by anti-apartheid activists and training more blacks than any other missiology department in South Africa. Inus refused to accept the offer until after the war ended and he could make orderly arrangements for his successors at Fambidzano. Despite Inus joining his wife and children in Pretoria in 1981, the strains of the war years had destroyed his marriage and it formally ended at the beginning of 1984. In 1986 his beloved older sister Nyasa died in a car accident; she had been his only sibling who shared a missionary vocation, and he felt her loss keenly.

But the end of the marriage gave Inus the energy to resume his work, and the third volume of *Old and new* appeared in 1988. In 1987 he published a widely acclaimed one-volume introduction to African Independent Churches called *Quest for belonging*. In 1989 appeared both *Fambidzano* and a Unisa study guide *Christian theology of Africa* that has received wide use throughout South Africa. Despite directing a large number of master's and doctoral candidates at Unisa, he longed to return to his homeland of Zimbabwe. Obtaining research funds from Unisa and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), he began commuting to Zimbabwe, where he assembled a research team to investigate the spirituality of *Chimurenga*, the liberation struggle. The team included researchers who had worked with him in the 1970s and who had struggled through the war years together, men such as Leonard Gono, the Reverend Solomon Zvanaka and Bishop Reuben Marinda. Notable among the researchers was Gono, Inus's adopted Shona son, with whom he shared both work and ventures into the Zambezi wilderness until Gono's untimely death from Aids in 1995.

The *Chimurenga* research was a delicate matter, for the guerrillas had been hardened by years in the bush, and their hostility to Christianity persisted after the war. Many AIC leaders and members had been persecuted or even

executed by guerrillas, with Bibles destroyed and the name of Jesus practically silenced. Traditional religion had experienced a renaissance during the war, with spirit mediums and the cultic centres warning the freedom fighters of Rhodesian troop movements. Digging up the religious dimensions of *Chimurenga* was in some ways risky. Yet the process helped with the healing of deep wartime scars. Based on his research, Inus wrote a novel about the wartime activities of traditional and AIC leaders entitled *guerrilla snuff*. When the novel appeared in 1995, it won the African Booksellers' prize for best English novel. Yet even in writing fiction, Inus Daneel proved to be controversial, for although he was writing to present a favourable 'insider's' view of the guerrilla struggle, he was white.

While conducting research in the areas of his childhood, Inus had become increasingly concerned at the deforestation and ecological degradation of the land, including traditionally sacred areas formerly rich with trees and wildlife. In the post-independence context, opportunists and squatters had begun exploiting the natural resources of Masvingo Province, their damage to the environment exacerbated by lack of government supervision and devastating droughts. By the mid-1980s, despair was gripping the peasant society concerning its lack of control over the environment and such issues as land distribution. In his discussions with ex-combatants, spirit mediums and chiefs, Inus realised that a common theme was the 'lost lands'; even though the land had been politically regained from the whites, it was still lost through ecological destruction. Consequently, in 1988 Daneel's research team launched Zirrcon, the Zimbabwean Institute for Religious Research and Ecological Conservation. Zirrcon sought to investigate the connections between religion and the environment. A group of spirit mediums and chiefs met repeatedly with the Zirrcon research team at Inus's Masvingo house in 1988, and together they launched an association to put traditionalist religious support behind a 'war of the trees', an effort to plant trees and preserve water and wildlife resources. The combined Zirrcon/traditionalist group began planting trees immediately, drawing upon traditional ancestral rituals to protect the saplings. By 1990 the group had founded Aztrec (Association of Zimbabwean Traditional Ecologists), which enlisted spirit mediums, chiefs and others in its reforestation efforts. The oracle of Mwari at Matonjeni approved of Aztrec's founding.

As Zirrcon and Aztrec increased their environmental efforts, planting trees and running woodlots, many AIC leaders sought to affiliate with Zirrcon and join the tree-planting efforts. During the 1990–91 rainy season, Zirrcon

provided trees to four AICs for the first Christian tree-planting rituals. Despite opposition from traditionalists and Christians who did not want the groups to cooperate with each other, in March of 1991 a group of AIC bishops and Zirrcon launched the Association of African Earthkeeping Churches (AAEC).⁸ By the end of the year, over 100 AICs had joined the green movement, and Zirrcon and its affiliate organisations were caring for ten nurseries. By 1995 the member churches of the AAEC represented an estimated two million people who regularly met together for communion services, in which confession of ecological sin and tree planting were central. As he had done for Fambidzano, Inus travelled to Europe raising money to fund the environmental movement, and he brokered meetings among hostile groups, government officials and development officers. Once the AICs became engaged in environmental reform, the AAEC and Aztrec agreed to cooperate in each other's tree-planting ceremonies, a remarkable show of grassroots ecumenism between groups whose worldviews were in competition. 'Forward the war of the trees!' became a battle cry in the 1990s, an initiative continuous with religious activities during *Chimurenga* for liberation of the lost lands, although this time through reforestation rather than fighting. Just as combatants had adopted aliases during the war, many leaders in the tree-planting movement adopted personal tree names. Inus's name, *Muchakata*, the wild cork tree, symbolised a tree that was traditionally never to be felled for any reason.

By 1991, as founder of Fambidzano, the ecumenical movement of AICs, and Zirrcon, the umbrella organisation for grassroots environmentalism, Inus Daneel received a singular honour. Zionists in the AAEC began calling him 'Bishop Moses', for his role as a prophetic leader. Although he ignored the title at first, by the mid-1990s it was officially acknowledged among the Ndaza Zionists, who made him a robe symbolic of his office. At tree-planting and other religious ceremonies, he often functioned as a prophet through preaching and healing by the laying-on of hands. Dancing in a Zionist circle with brother bishops, Inus was welcomed as a leader in African terms, regardless of prejudices in the West against a white man holding such a position. Prophet not only to the Shona but to the outside world, Inus's increasing publications on African spiritualities and theologies of earth care demonstrated that African cultures had important resources for environmentalism – resources often overlooked by modern society.

8 For information on the environmental work of Zirrcon, see Daneel 1998 and 2000.

New beginnings and challenges

In 1995 Inus Daneel received a three-year grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts to guide a team of researchers in empirical research projects on African Initiatives in Christian Mission in Southern Africa. Early in 1997 the project held an international conference in Pretoria, drawing together researchers and bishops from several AICs. What became clear at the conference was that Daneel's lifelong agenda of respecting the cultural basis and theological authenticity of African Initiated Christianity had finally come into its own. With the passing of the apartheid regimes in the former Rhodesia and South Africa, the relationship between religion and culture came to the forefront in a way it could not while political change was the uppermost issue for theology. In the new South Africa, as in Zimbabwe, AICs comprised nearly fifty percent of all Christians. What in the 1960s had been a hard-fought battle to convince mission scholars that AICs were 'bridges to the Christian future' had by the 1990s become a commonplace assumption. By the year 2000 six books had been published in the series 'African Initiatives in Christian Mission,' edited by Daneel and Dana Robert, and published by Unisa Press. With more books in various stages of preparation, the series represents an ongoing contribution to understanding the nature of African mission during a time of rapid church growth on the continent.

Having done the groundwork for the funding of a new environmental venture at Unisa, Inus was instrumental in raising 2,3 million Rand from the mining corporation Gold Fields, in 1995. The money funded an institute, 'Faith and Earthkeeping', that operated out of Unisa on principles similar to those of Zirrcon. Leaving the institute in capable hands, however, he took early retirement from Unisa so he could devote more time to research and writing, the 'African Initiatives' series, and to Zirrcon. Inus also began exploring the possibility of organising an African Earthkeeper's Union to spread the Zirrcon message across the continent. Then in February 1996 he married Dana Robert, a missiologist at Boston University, thereby expanding his horizon to North America in partnership with a kindred spirit. He began a new schedule of commuting between the United States and Zimbabwe, and teaching at Boston University part time.

Two of the first volumes in the African Initiatives series are Inus's books on *African earthkeepers*, description and analysis of the Zirrcon environmental movement spearheaded by traditionalists and Christians. An American condensed version was published by Orbis Press in 2001. But starting in

2000, with the appearance of a viable opposition to Robert Mugabe's twenty-year rule in Zimbabwe, Mugabe and his cronies launched a series of violent land invasions designed to cement his hold on power. As the political and economic meltdown of Zimbabwe quickened, and the role of whites in leadership positions became increasingly untenable, on 17 July 2000, Inus Daneel retired from his position as head of the Board of Trustees of Zirrccon. He nevertheless continued being chief fundraiser and organiser of a new theological education by extension programme under Zirrccon auspices. In 2000 and 2001 he conducted research on the high-god cult in order to produce a follow-up study thirty-five years after having first being admitted to the oracular sessions. On 24 August 2001, he celebrated turning 65 by going hunting in the rugged Doma hills.

As the year 2002 unfolds, the future of Inus Daneel's ministry in Zimbabwe remains uncertain. As racial tensions increase and economic collapse continues, the immediate future looks grim. Research is made nearly impossible by fuel shortages, runaway inflation, massive corruption and government-fomented anarchy. Aids and poverty haunt the country and destroy work by cutting down friends and co-workers in the prime of life. Life savings are depleted by devaluation of currency and hyperinflation. The massive felling of trees and wholesale destruction of wildlife is heart-breaking. The political crisis means that Inus Daneel is spending most of his time trying to survive, and mediating among war veterans and farmers in efforts to preserve the natural resources of the Masvingo area. The 'war of the trees' is facing environmental and communal degradation even worse than in the 1980s.

To offer a final evaluation of the creative ministry and scholarship of Inus Daneel is impossible, for by the grace of God he is still standing. His scholarship has deeply influenced researchers in the fields of African traditional religions and African Christianity. It has also shaped the field of AIC studies by opening new perspectives in analysing them, as well as making observation rather than abstract theory the normative standard in their evaluation.⁹ His *old and new* series remains the most comprehensive study of AICs in a single ethnic group. His prophetic stance toward

9 Daneel's work has had an impact on many scholars, including former students Allan Anderson, Nicolas Stebbing, Marcelle Manley, Titus Presler, Stephen Hayes and Stan Nussbaum; fellow researchers Janet Hodgson, Terence Ranger, Matthew Schoffeleers, David Barrett, Attie Van Niekerk, Hennie Pretorius and others. Some scholars have leaned heavily

grassroots ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue and ecological conservation has influenced Africans in southern Africa and European scholars abroad. But above all, he has become a folk theologian – a non-traditional missionary who has put his life at the service of the Shona African Independent Churches, helping them to articulate theologies that reflect their culture and to communicate their gifts to the rest of the world.

Bibliography

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on Daneel's research in their own publications, for example see Michael Bourdillon, *The Shona peoples: an ethnography of the contemporary Shona, with special reference to their religion* (Gwelo, Rhodesia: Mambo Press, 1976), and Harvey Cox, *Fire from heaven: the rise of Pentecostal spirituality and the reshaping of religion in the twenty-first century* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley 1995).